

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /066 W
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R 151223Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3467
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 0944

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, UV
SUBJECT: DISSATISFACTION IN WESTERN REGION OF UPPER VOLTA

REF: OUAGADOUGOU 0307

1. PRESIDENT LAMIZANA IS TRAVELLING TO BOBO-DIOULASSO WITH HIS CABINET, REPORTEDLY TO ATTEND A PUBLIC RALLY THERE TODAY AND HOLD THE WEEKLY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING. THEY WILL ALSO VISIT BANFORA. OFFICIALLY THIS IS DESCRIBED AS A PRESENTATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF THE WEST. IN REALITY, HOWEVER, IT IS AN ATTEMPT BY THE GOVERNMENT TO MOLLIFY FEELINGS OF DISSATISFACTION THAT HAVE BEEN BUILDING UP IN THE WESTERN REGION, AND IN BOBO-DIOULASSO IN PARTICULAR.

2. SOME OF THE FEELING IS LONG-STANDING AND ALMOST INHERENT IN THE SITUATION. AT ONE TIME UNDER THE FRENCH, BOBO-DIOULASSO WAS THE CAPITAL; THE MOVEMENT OF THE CAPITAL TO OUAGADOUGOU HAS ALWAYS BEEN RESENTED. ETHNIC CONSIDERATIONS ARE ALSO BUILT-
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IN; OUAGADOUGOU IS THE HEARTLAND OF THE MOSSI PEOPLE, WHO MAKE UP HALF THE POPULATION. BOBO-DIOULASSO IS A NATURAL FOCAL POINT FOR ANTI-MOSSİ SENTIMENT.

3. OTHER GRIEVANCES ARE MORE DISCRETE. BOBO PEOPLE CLAIM THAT NONE OF THE KEY POSITIONS THERE ARE HELD BY PEOPLE OF LOCAL ORIGIN, E.G. PREFECT, ARMY COMMANDER, GENDARMERIE CHIEF.

THERE IS PARTICULAR RESENTMENT AGAINST A MOSSI OFFICIAL WHO IS IN CHARGE OF ALLOCATING PARCELS OF LAND IN THE CITY; SOMEHOW MOSSI PEOPLE GET ALLOCATIONS AND BOBO PEOPLE DO NOT. DISPUTES HAVE ARISEN WHEN MOSSI IMMIGRANTS IN THE FERTILE VALLEY OF THE KOU RIVER NEAR BOBO HAVE TRIED TO SET UP THEIR CHIEFS IN CONTROL OF ALL THE POPULATION IN THE AREA. PEOPLE IN BOBO-DIOULASSO ALSO NOTE THAT ONLY FOUR OUT OF NINETEEN MEMBERS OF THE NEW CABINET ARE FROM THE WEST AND NOT A SINGLE ONE IS FROM BOBO.

4. SO FAR THE DISCONTENT IS NOT OPENLY ORGANIZED. PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT A "MOUVEMENT AUTONOME DE L'OUEST" (REFTEL), BUT NO LEADERS HAVE IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES. THE "MOUVEMENT" MAY BE MORE OF A STATE OF MIND THAN AN ORGANIZATION.

5. AT THIS POINT THE SITUATION IS NOT SERIOUS. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNMENT HAS FELT COMPELLED TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE WESTERN REGION.
GRAHAM

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Sent Date: 15-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
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